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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Muslims to Pope: Muslims Are Not Natural-Born Terrorists - Sabah
Washington Post: Peshmerge Terror in Northern Iraq - Cumhuriyet
Putin Calls on US to Announce Exit Date from Iraq - Aksam
Another Turk Abducted in Iraq - Sabah
4 Turkish Terror Suspects Under Detention in Iraq - Milliyet
Nicosia: Turkey Cannot Begin EU Talks Without Recognizing Cyprus - Hurriyet 8/21
 Hamas Vows to Continue Fight Against Israel - DB-Tercuman 8/21
Afghanistan Ready for September 18 Polls - Milliyet
2 PKK Terrorists Killed in Tunceli - Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS

Iraqi Constitution Deadline May be Extended Again - Zaman
Turkmen, Sunnis Under Kurdish Pressure in Northern Iraq - Yeni Safak
Kurds, Turkmen, Arabs Rally in Kirkuk Against Federalism - Zaman 8/21
US Allows 'Sharia' in Iraq - Cumhuriyet 8/21
US in Iraq Until 2009 - Yeni Safak
Saddam: I Will Die for Iraq, Palestine - Zaman
Americans' Support for Bush Nosedives - Yeni Safak 8/21
Merkel: We Don't Want Turkey in EU - Cumhuriyet 8/21
Pope Calls for Dialogue with Muslim World - Zaman 8/21
Gaza Evacuation to End, Palestine Elections Up Next - Zaman 8/21
Israel Hands over Gaza to Palestine - Yeni Safak 8/21
4 US Troops Killed in Afghanistan - Cumhuriyet
Kaddafi Invites Bush, Rice to Libya - Radikal

BRIEFING

Erdogan, Baykal on 'Kurdish Problem': Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday that the Kurdish problem and PKK terrorism must be viewed as two separate issues. 'The Kurds are also our nationals. In Turkey there are not only Kurds, but also 30 other ethnic identities as well,' Erdogan stressed. 'All of these groups have citizenship in the republic of Turkey.' Main opposition (CHP) leader Deniz Baykal criticized Erdogan for paving the way for the politicization of the ethnic issue, adding that the PM's remarks with regard to the 'Kurdish issue' had weakened Turkey in the fight against terrorism. Baykal voiced concern that the terrorists will take advantage of the concessions made by Erdogan in their efforts to force the Turkish government to accept imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan as an interlocutor.

Media Skeptical on PKK Cease-Fire: Turkish papers are skeptical about the reliability of the unilateral one-month cease-fire decision announced by the PKK last week. Monday papers report that two PKK terrorists were killed in fighting with security forces in rural parts of the eastern province of Tunceli yesterday. A policeman was wounded in fighting with PKK militants in the Black Sea port city of Trabzon, and police issued warnings against possible attacks by female PKK suicide bombers in major Turkish cities. Saturday's "Milliyet" claimed that the PKK shrugged off a declaration by former Kurdish lawmakers in the Democratic Society Movement (DTH) in which the activists called on the PKK to announce an unconditional, indefinite cease-fire. Businessmen and non-governmental organizations in Diyarbakir also called on the PKK to lay down its arms without preconditions. Sezgin Tanrikulu, a prominent human rights lawyer in Diyarbakir, said that 'a cease-fire is not sufficient. The PKK needs to renounce terrorism as a method for achieving its goals.'

Turkey's National Security Council to Discuss Kurdish Broadcasting, Terror: Turkey's National Security Council (NSC) is to discuss proposed amendments to regulations on Kurdish broadcasting at its monthly meeting on Tuesday. Sources at the prime ministry told the press that the military views the new regulation, which would pave the way for Kurdish language broadcasting on private television channels in the southeast, as 'positive.' But the military also believes that tight controls are needed to prevent broadcasts against national security and unity, according to the report. Tuesday's NSC meeting will bring together PM Erdogan, who recently acknowledged the existence of a 'Kurdish problem' in Turkey, and military commanders who are demanding wider authority in the fight against terrorism, Monday's "Milliyet" comments. The military members of the NSC are expected to submit to the council a terrorism report that argues that the problem in southeast Turkey should be defined as a 'terrorism issue' instead of a 'Kurdish issue,' some papers claim. "Sabah" reports, however, that the meeting will focus mainly on the EU, Cyprus, and Iraq.

Controversial Conference on Armenian Issue to be Held in September: A conference on the allegations of Armenian genocide will be held at Istanbul's Bogazici University on Sept 23-25, "Hurriyet" reported on Monday. In May, strong criticism, including by the government, forced the cancellation of the conference, which was to discuss non-official approaches to the suffering of the Armenians during the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Academics from Turkey's Bosphorus, Bilgi, and Sabanci universities as well as Turkish scholars from US universities such as Yale, Harvard, Brown, Minnesota, and Michigan are expected to participate in the conference.

Ambassador Dowlatabadi on Iran-Turkey Ties: Iran's Ambassador to Ankara, Firuz Dowlatabadi, told "Milliyet" on Saturday that the new Iranian President, Mahmud Ahmedinajad, wants to improve bilateral ties with Turkey. 'Our goal is to increase bilateral trade to 10 billion USD,' Dowlatabadi said. He noted that the appointment of the former Iranian ambassador to Ankara, Manoushehr Mottaki, as the new foreign minister would positively affect Turkey-Iran ties. 'The new priority of Mottaki will be the establishment of good relations with Turkey and other neighbors,' Mottaki stressed. The Iranian ambassador downplayed concerns that Tehran would resume efforts to export its Islamic revolution to Turkey, assuring that Tehran will stick to its policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries.

Senator Graham on Iraq, Turkey: US Republican Senator Lindsey Graham told "Fox News" that if the Iraqi Kurds leave Iraq in a that creates problems for Turkey, it would represent a big problem for the United States as well, Monday's "Zaman" reports. Graham said that success in Iraq is of the utmost importance for the future of the United States. Meanwhile, several papers report that Republican Senator Chuck Hagel said over the weekend that the situation in Iraq is becoming 'more and more like Vietnam.' Hagel reportedly called on the Bush administration to develop alternatives for beginning a pullout of US troops from Iraq.

Turkmen Demand Own Federal State if Iraq Goes Becomes a Federal Republic: Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) chairman Dr. Sadettin Ergec told the private news agency IHA that Turkmen would not oppose a federation that respects the demographic structure of Kirkuk, Monday's "Yeni Safak" reported. Ergic noted that the Kurds had not given up demands for a federal regime in northern Iraq. 'We will not oppose a federal system as long as it does not change the demography of Kirkuk. Kirkuk has special characteristics, with its Kurdish, Turkmen and Arab populations,' Ergec emphasized. 'The Kurds have the administration of three provinces in the north, and the Arabs control 14 provinces in the south. It is only natural that the Turkmen should have the administration of one province out of 18 in Iraq,' Ergec stressed.

No Evidence Linking Iraqi Diplomat to Terror Groups: Tarik Hamdi, the press attache at the Iraqi Embassy in Ankara, has extended his stay in Baghdad, where he had been recalled on August 15 following Turkish press reports alleging he had links with Osama bin-Ladin. Hamdi had been expected to return to Ankara last Thursday. Hamdi is a US citizen of Iraqi origin. An investigation was opened about him in the United States in 2001, but no evidence was been found linking him to al-Qaida or terror activities.

General Tolon Hands Over First Army Command to General Basbug: 'I am handing over an army that has not lost its identity in the degeneration of globalization, that does not need recipes from foreign sources for its modernization, and that believes that Turkish troops will not pull out of north Cyprus,' outgoing First Army Commander General Hursit Tolon said at a change of command ceremony in Istanbul on Sunday. Tolon 'strongly condemned' the efforts of Turkish intellectuals who met with Prime Minister Erdogan last week

in the government's bid to resolve the `Kurdish problem.' Tolon accused the intellectuals of trying to change the unitary structure of Turkey. General Tolon was replaced as First Army Commander by former Deputy TGS Chief General Ilker Basbug.

New Kurdish Group Aims Constitutional Changes in Turkey: Sunday's "Cumhuriyet" carries a report outlining some provisions of the draft party program of the Democratic Society Movement (DTH), which was established by former Kurdish lawmakers including Leyla Zana. The DTH program advocates a new constitution that formally recognizes the Kurdish identity. It aims at removing all restrictions on Kurdish education and broadcasting. The program calls for a general amnesty, and argues that armed groups be allowed to take part in democratic political life in Turkey. The DTH program also calls for special economic planning for the southeast.

Turkish Sanctions Damage Greek Cypriot Economy: Monday's "Yeni Safak" cites the Greek Cypriot press pointing to the damage caused by Turkish to the economy of south. The significance of the Cypriot port city of Limasol decreased dramatically after Turkey began denying access to its ports for Greek Cypriot vessels and other container ships in 1997.

Pope Benedict to Visit Turkey: Sunday's "Sabah" reports that Pope Benedict XVI will visit Turkey from November 28-30 as the guest of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I in Istanbul.

4 Turks Under Detention in Iraq: Iraqi security forces have under detention 281 foreigners, including 4 Turks, for suspected involvement in terror activities, Monday's "Yeni Safak" reports. The majority of the suspects under detention are Arabs, an Iraqi government spokesman said.

2 PKK Militants Killed in Tunceli: Security forces killed two members of the separatist PKK in rural parts of the eastern province of Tunceli on Sunday, the governor's office said. Security operations continue in the region.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq/Terrorism

"Will Iraq Remain Federal?"

Yasemin Congar argued in the mainstream daily "Milliyet" (8/22): "If there is no last minute delay, the draft constitution for Iraq will be completed today. But it won't eliminate concerns regarding the country's future. Actually, this draft will replace the question of `will Iraq be federal' with the question `will Iraq remain federal?' Although officials in Washington stress that the drafting process belongs to the Iraqis, it is well known that the US has intervened directly in the process. An agreement will be reached based on the concessions made by the various sides. So far, there are fewer concessions coming from the Shiites. The US Ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, spent his weekend in shuttle diplomacy between the Shiites and the Kurds. Even though we haven't seen the latest constitutional draft, the information we do have makes clear that this draft anticipates a federal structure. Sunni Arabs are against federalism, because they are concerned about Shiite autonomy. But the principle of federalism has become non-negotiable for the Kurds. Right from the start, Washington has believed that federalism is a must to maintain the unity of Iraq. But there are still concerns that federalism could ultimately lead to the country's disintegration. A federal regime that allows Shiites and Kurds to act illegally will carry the country back to its past. In sum, the struggle in Iraq will not end with the completion of the constitution. Steps taken by the Iraqis in the days ahead will determine whether the federal union will remain just a paper exercise, and whether the country will surrender to violence.

"The PKK: A Human Rights Issue"

Ardan Zenturk wrote in the conservative-sensational "Star" (8/22): "I am not interested in whether people call it the `Kurdish issue' or the `Southeast issue.' In my opinion, it is a human rights issue. Young people between the ages of 15-25 are being taken to training camps - sometimes by force, sometimes through brainwashing applied by the terrorist organization. After a short training period, they are sent back to Anatolia with a Kalashnikov and a few bullets. The terrorists use these kids for their own political goals and send them to fight against the Turkish military. If human life is the most valuable thing for them, where are all the human rights defenders in Europe? Even if the Turkish soldiers who die defending their territory don't mean anything to them, at least they should exert some effort to stop the terror organization from sending these youngsters to die."

"Learning to Live With Terror"

Yilmaz Oztuna commented in the conservative "Turkiye" (8/22): "Terrorism has reached almost every country in the world. Some countries have even learned to live with

terrorism. Although signs of disintegration can be seen in some terrorist organizations, this may be very deceptive. Some international powers could immediately push new groups onto the scene or try to sell the old ones as new. It shouldn't be forgotten that terrorism is a profitable business for terrorists as well as those fighting against them. Last week everyone was focused on Sharon's withdrawal plan from Gaza. But evacuating Gaza will never stop the actions of Hamas and the other terror organizations supported by Iran or the Palestinians. In Turkey, DYP leader Mehmet Agar suggested that the PKK would disintegrate on its own. This is probably the only way that Kurdish youth can be saved from the terror organization, and for Kurdish-origin Turks to have some peace. But the PKK can no longer control these actions. The strings are not in the PKK's hands. There are some other powers holding the strings and gaining time against Turkey by loosening and tightening them at their whim. After the Gaza withdrawal, Egyptian President Husnu Mubarak referred to Sharon as a 'brave man'. This is an unbelievable change. But peace in the Middle East still has a long way to go. For the moment, it remains well over the horizon."

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